

Amendments to the Claims

This "Listing of Claims" replaces all prior versions of claims in the subject application:

32. (Currently Amended) A process for the recovery of an organic acid ester from a fermentation broth comprising:

(a) conducting a fermentation to produce a fermentation broth, wherein the fermentation broth comprises an organic acid and microbial biomass;

(ab) drying said fermentation broth to obtain ~~a~~ an organic acid-containing dried product, wherein said drying occurs without prior removal of ~~insolubles~~ said microbial biomass from said organic acid-containing fermentation broth;

(bc) adding said organic acid-containing dried product of step (ab) to a lower alcohol in the presence of an acid to obtain a free organic acid,

(ed) esterifying the free organic acid to the corresponding ester; and

(de) removing insolubles to obtain a solution comprising an organic acid ester, wherein the insolubles include the microbial biomass.

33-35. (Cancelled)

36. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein ~~at~~ in step (bc) the concentration of said organic acid added to said lower alcohol is from about 50 g/L to about 100 g/L.

37. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein in step (ab) drying comprises spray drying said fermentation broth.

38. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein the reaction temperature ~~at~~ in steps (bc) and (ed) is from about 25° C to about 60° C.

39. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein ~~at~~in step (~~b~~c) said lower alcohol is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, propanol, butanol and glycol.

40. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein ~~at~~in step (~~b~~c) about 1.2 equivalents of acid is added.

41. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein ~~at~~in step (~~b~~c) said acid is selected from the group consisting of sulphuric acid, hydrobromic acid, hydrochloric acid and phosphoric acid.

42. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 41, wherein ~~at~~in step (~~b~~c) said acid is sulphuric acid.

43. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein ~~at~~in step (~~d~~e) the process for removing insolubles comprises filtration.

44. (Original) The process of claim 32, wherein said organic acid comprises lactic acid, 2-keto-L-gulonic acid, citric acid or gluconic acid.

45. (Original) The process of claim 44, wherein said organic acid is 2-keto-L-gulonic acid.